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RUEHVB/AMEMBASSY ZAGREB PRIORITY 5452
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 USNATO 000103

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SUBJECT: NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL READOUT - MARCH 19, 2008

Classified By: DCM Richard G. Olson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C/NF) Summary from the NAC Meeting:

-- Afghanistan: Chairman of the Military Committee Henault briefed the military chain of command's poppy assessment. In the operations update, IMS Assistant Director for Operations MG Li Gobbi briefed on the increased ability of Opposing Militant Forces (OMF) to move forces and resources from Pakistan to Afghanistan. Ambassador Nuland commended ISAF's public affairs staff, which recently responded aggressively and quickly to counter claims of civilian casualties, resulting in balanced media coverage.

-- Balkans: The SYG called for a common strategy by the international community on Kosovo, and briefed on his phone call to UNSYG leading to UNMIK redeploying in north Mitrovica. Serbian parliamentary elections add a new political wrinkle to Kosovo situation.

-- Africa) Support to the AU: No discussion.

-- Iraq: The SYG informed the NAC that as per Tuesday's discussion in another forum, the Private Office would release an SG in response to PM Maliki's letter on January 29, highlighting the progress made on the structured cooperation framework for Iraq, the continuation of the NATO Training Mission-Iraq through 2009, and the consideration of the training requests in the Prime Minister's letter.

-- AOB: The SYG called attention to a letter from the Government of Malta, which requested that its participation in the Partnership for Peace be reactivated. UK Deputy PermRep Kidd related Prime Minister Brown's plans to announce Wednesday a new UK national security strategy. Ambassador Nuland expressed her displeasure that the Bucharest Summit meeting schedule was altered following final approval by the Council, and pressed the IS to revert to the approved version.

END SUMMARY.

Afghanistan

¶2. (C/NF) Chairman of the Military Committee Henault briefed the military chain of command's poppy assessment. He cited links between the narcotics trade and the insurgency, stating that the military chain of command's "best estimate" was that the Taliban received ten percent of its funding from the narcotics trade, as well as the negative effects of narcotics on government corruption. General Henault cited UNODC figures predicting 2008 cultivation to be approximately the same as 2007, and stated that ISAF predicts a decrease in the north and east, an increase in the south and west due to insecurity, and importantly, tribal and religious norms in the north and east that translate into more support for government, shura, or religious decrees against planting. He noted the growing problem of cannabis cultivation in provinces classified as poppy-free.

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¶3. (C/NF) IMS Assistant Director for Operations MG Li Gobbi gave the operations update, beginning with the assertion that a continued truce between the government and militants in Pakistan's border regions has resulted in an enhancement of the ability of Opposing Militant Forces (OMF) to move forces and resources from Pakistan to Afghanistan. He stated that ISAF planners were paying close attention to potential threats because of the republication of the Prophet Mohamed cartoons in Denmark, the imminent release of Dutch politician Wilders' anti-Islam film, and potential suicide attacks against crowds during the March 20 Now Ruz celebrations. Li Gobbi stated the some mobile phone service providers have begun complying with the Taliban's demand that providers turn off service in the evening.

¶4. (C/NF) Highlights of MG Li Gobbi's regional brief pointed to increasing cooperation from local nationals in RC-Capital's problematic Surobi district, large numbers of ISAF medical civil affairs patrols in RC-Capital and RC-North, a continued focus from RC-West on Farah province, joint ISAF-Afghan operations to provide the security for construction on the Ring Road segment between Gereshk and Kandahar, and significant progress in governance and reconstruction in RC-East's Kapisa province.

¶5. (C/NF) Ambassador Nuland cited the United States' comprehensive counterinsurgency activity in RC-East, with joint planning on the security, counternarcotics, and governance fronts, as a key reason for the decrease in poppy cultivation in the east, although in some areas the security concerns remain high. She pointed to the success RC-East has seen in rewarding governors who take decisive action against poppy, enabling them to use these rewards to provide alternative livelihoods and better services to the population. She also commended ISAF's public affairs staff, which responded aggressively and quickly on March 18 to counter spurious claims of civilian casualties, resulting in balanced media coverage.

Balkans

16. (C/NF) The SYG told the Council today that based on his recent visit to Kosovo and in the aftermath of Monday's violence, it has become clear that there needs to be a common strategy supported by all the relevant international players (NATO, the EU, and the U.N.) that would deal with effective coordination among the international community in the upcoming Serbian elections in May, UNMIK-EULEX transition, and developing a coordinated response to Serbian provocations that could lead to more violence. He called on respective capitals to use their contacts in Belgrade to send a clear message on refraining from further provocations by Serbia and Kosovo Serbs and to respect previous commitments to non-violence. The SYG also said that COMKFOR had issued a strong clarification regarding press reports suggesting that KFOR has implemented martial law. The SYG noted such reports are detrimental to the mission and that NATO is not in any position to declare martial law. The SYG mentioned that he

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spoke to the U.N. Secretary General last night by phone regarding UNMIK's plans to redeploy to north Mitrovica. The CMC confirmed in his briefing that UNMIK as of today has begun redeploying to the northern part of the city, which has been calm over the last 24 hours following Monday's events, and an increase in KFOR troop levels. The CMC informed the NAC that KFOR will maintain the increased troop presence in northern Mitrovica at least until March 21 and followed up in response to a Bulgarian inquiry that COMKFOR will then decide based on the situation on the ground if the increased troop presence is needed. He underlined that COMKFOR does have the flexibility to further reinforce trouble spots based on the taskforce deployments with no caveats and that 47 of the 56 companies are trained in crowd and riot control. Lastly, the CMC noted that with the approval of the NAC Execution Directive for the Bridging document, KFOR has begun to adjust its current posture in preparation to assume new taskings in coordination with a revision of the operational plan. He also noted that the military committee has approved the minimum military requirements document to resource the NATO new tasks during the bridging period.

17. (C/NF) Slovenia informed the NAC that the EU presidency had issued a statement condemning the recent violence and called on all parties to respect UNSCR 1244 and the mandate of UNMIK. He also informed the Council about a meeting of PSC ambassadors with the head of the EULEX mission, de Kermabon, where the clear message was sent by de Kermabon that the EULEX mission will deploy throughout Kosovo. Spain, echoing the SYG, also called for a coordinated approach from the international community and informed the Council that Madrid would be demarching Belgrade to adhere to their previous statements on refraining from making inflammatory statements that could lead to further violence. France, with support from Norway, also called for a coordinated approach to messages being sent from the international community and to be mindful of the political context that we find ourselves in the run-up to the Serbian parliamentary elections in May. Both Norway and France highlighted the importance of not undermining the moderate, pro-EU forces in Serbia and avoiding situations that could be exploited by Serbian radicals, a point echoed by Latvia. Turkey requested additional information regarding UNMIK's restructuring during the transition period and what the transfer of authority means for their mandate in the north. Estonia called for the international community to be more pro-active and not allow events to engulf us, and asked for further information regarding the K-Serbs in the north and the size of the radical elements among the population. The CMC promised to get more information on the K-Serbs and provide it to PermReps. Portugal echoed Turkey's inquiries on UNMIK and further pointed to the public diplomacy aspects of ensuring that NATO takes an active role in explaining events to the outside world and not letting press rumors and speculations drive the story on Kosovo. Ambassador Nuland thanked the SYG for his engagement with the U.N. SYG, which is leading to

UNMIK redeployment to north Mitrovica, and informed the NAC that U.S. bilateral efforts are focused on getting all sides to renounce violence and avoid incendiary statements, a message that should be conveyed by other countries outside of the region. The SYG responded to Turkey's question on UNMIK,

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saying that what will be important is that UNMIK continue to have an adequate police presence while working with the EU on the transitioning of tasks. The SYG also said he would be signing a condolence letter for the Ukrainian mission in the aftermath of a Ukrainian UNMIK police officer's death.

Iraq

¶8. (C/NF) The SYG informed the NAC that as per Tuesday's discussion in another forum, the Private Office would release an SG in response to PM Maliki's letter on January 29, highlighting the progress made in the Political Committee on the structured cooperation framework for Iraq; that the NATO Training Mission-Iraq (NTM-I) would continue through 2009; and that the training requests in the Prime Minister's letter would be fully considered after guidance is received from the Military Committee. The SYG noted that this military guidance was under silence until Wednesday afternoon.

AOB

¶9. (C/NF) The SYG called attention to a letter from the Government of Malta, which requested that its participation in the Partnership for Peace be reactivated. Ambassador Nuland welcomed the Maltese government's renewed interest for involvement and noted Malta's hope for a quick reactivation process, with participation at Bucharest as a goal. The SYG planned to forward to the PermReps the Maltese letter, along with recommendations on moving forward by NATO's legal advisor. He expected to take up discussion of the matter next week.

¶10. (C/NF) British Deputy PermRep Kidd related Prime Minister Brown's plans to announce Wednesday a new UK national security strategy. Kidd emphasized that this new overarching approach would represent a break from previous strategies, by drawing on tools and capabilities from each unit of government. It would additionally redefine security in terms of both the state and the citizenry, addressing "immediate threats and underlying drivers." Kidd promised to circulate the text of the announcement when it was available. The SYG noted his intentions to speak with PM Brown this afternoon.

¶11. (C/NF) Ambassador Nuland expressed her displeasure that the Bucharest Summit meeting schedule was altered following final approval by the Council. She noted that the revised schedule created conflicts for the U.S. delegation and pressed the IS to revert to the approved version. PermRep Duque additionally related his preference for the approved schedule. The SYG assured the Council that he would investigate the matter, but he could not make any guarantees due to the complexity of the issue.

NULAND